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2006-14

Final Report

Submitted to USDA, CSREES, Awards Management

Special Grant

“Center for Food Quality-Utah”

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CENTER FOR FOOD QUALITY—UTAH

FINAL REPORT TO USDA, CSREES

1. Introduction and acknowledgements

We thank the United States Congress and USDA, CSREES for funding this Special Needs Project. This award number is 2003-34497-13911. Even though the Project received only one year's funding, it was able to accomplish most of the goals that had been established for the Project. Findings generated by the Project have appeared in top referred journals in the agricultural economics and dairy science professions. The findings have also been presented at meetings in the United States and Europe.

This Project has achieved many important milestones. Its contributions are through the cutting edge research that has taken place under the auspices of the project and through the international training received by graduate students who were supported partially by funding from the Project. At least 10 American students received partial support from the Project to complete International MBA degrees in Food and Agribusiness Management. These students were trained in international food systems so that they would understand the emerging need for traceable food systems, HACCP systems, and international phytosanitary standards. Each of these students completed a research project and thesis dealing with a topic relating to maintaining food quality and the integrity of food systems. The students are now employed in the US and Canada in chemical companies, pharmaceutical companies, the US government, and financial institutions.

Research completed under the Project has focused on food traceability issues and preparedness for bioterrorist threats. One study, published in *Choices*, examined whether or not developing a two-stage traceability system, such as is the case in the United States, is the appropriate long-run strategy from the perspective of consumer acceptance. The findings suggest that it would be appropriate, if desired by private marketing firms, to allow extended *BSE* testing. Also, a significant number of U.S. consumers would prefer farm-to-fork traceability rather than two-stage traceability and would be willing to pay for it. Another study, published in the *Journal of Dairy Science*, found that American dairy farms in the western United States are not generally designing even rudimentary security plans for their operations, thus, suggesting that security could easily be breached at these farms for the purpose of contaminating feed or food products. Other studies relating to consumer demand for food traceability indicate that consumers value traceability, but that traceability would be best bundled with other verifiable characteristics, such as added assurance about food safety or assurances about humane animal treatment to maximize the extra amount consumers would be willing to pay for these characteristics.